

# critical digest

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## This Week

Six Characters in Search of an Author-Phoenix 12/11... 2nd production of season. With Michael Wager, Betty Lou Holland. Director. Tyrone Guthrie. ... Venus Preserv'd- Phoenix SideShow 12/12. Special one time only reading of Restoration play.

Dreams and Deeds-Radin Theatre-In Yiddish-Weekends Only.

Thesmophoriazusae- Roof-top 12/13. Revival of Aristophanes play.

## Next Week

Romeo and Juliet-Shakespearean Workshop-12/15... Hello Out There-Amato-12/21.

## Theatre on TV

"Edward My Son"- CBS-12/7 US Steel. With Robert Morley.

"Dream Girl"-NBC 12/11 Evans. With Vivian Blaine.

"Salome"-CBS 12/18. Omnibus. With Eartha Kitt ... "Babes in Toyland"-NBC 12/24. Leibman... "Peter Pan" NBC 1/9. With Mary Martin.

## Digests of Current NYC Theatre Reviews

Pipe Dream-Shubert-11/30. Split decision filed by NY drama critics on Rodgers and Hammerstein new musical based on Steinbeck's "Sweet Thursday." Times, Mirror and World Telegram & Sun aisle-sitters okayed new musical, though majority of critics filed mild negative notices. Atkinson, Times, admitted it was minor key R&H, but found it sweet, pleasant and enjoyable. Just a pretty good musical, adds Coleman, Mirror. All hailed newcomer Judy Tyler, as well as large cast headed by Bill Johnson and Helen Traubel. Con side headed by Kerr, Herald Tribune, who feared the promised joyous party never got started on-stage. Book was blamed more than score. Chapman, News, and Watts, Post, turned thumbs down mostly because of the large number of dull spots. McClain, Journal American, panned score for not being as much fun as Steinbeck book.

The Cradle Song-Circle in Square 12/1. Unanimous approval by 6 NY reviewers for revival of John Underhill's adaption of Gregorio and Maria Martinez Sierra Spanish play presented in NY in 1927. Large cast was applauded by all, as was Jose Quintero's direction. Beautifully acted, sums up Times man. Kerr, Herald Tribune, thought translation a bit dated, but otherwise production delightful. Mirror and Post critics both thought it ideally suited to arena staging. McClain, Journal American, billed it as more of a reading than a play, but he still enjoyed it.

Janus-Plymouth-11/24 New comedy starring Margaret Sullavan was enjoyed as light-hearted froth by all critics except Kerr, Herald Tribune, and Coleman, Mirror, who thought it was just unfunny. Wild and enjoyable, raves Atkinson, Times, Old style French sex-farce well done, lists Chapman, News. First play of Carolyn Green was rated by most as very professional and very funny. On the dissenter side, Kerr credited author with a funny idea that never explodes. Mirror reviewer panned it as tasteless and disappointing fare from such a reliable producer as Alfred de Liagre.

Paul Muni returned at short notice to cast of Inherit the Wind. He left cast three months ago to undergo surgery for removal of his left eye. Melvyn Douglas who replaced him will play the lead in the national company which opens its tour in Jan.

#### PLAYS

Heavenly Twins and Joyce Grenfel Requests the Pleasure and Last Love of Don Juan closed... Top Man suspended in Philadelphia due to "script revisions."... Pleasure Dome folded after 3 weeks of rehearsal due to financial problems... Great Sebastians will open at ANTA Playhouse Jan 4... Dancing in the Chequered Shade will open at Playhouse Jan 14... The Lark ticket prices raise Dec 26 to \$5.75 top for all nights.. Jackie Gleason will join Orsen Welles in Volpone on Broadway, Welles will probably replace show with Twelfth Night at City Center.

#### PLAYERS

Julie Harris injured her lip during performance of The Lark, finished the show with a bleeding lip, and returned to role at next performance... Command Performance at American Theatre Wing First Night Ball honoring Helen Hayes will present current stars as stars of famous hits of past. Tickets are \$50 for Dec 30 event. ... Earle Hyman has title role in Mister Johnson... Darren McGavin featured in The Innkeepers ... Eartha Kitt to star in Jazz Getaway... Charlton Heston and Joanne Woodward to star in The Lovers... Don Murray and Daryl Grimes added to Hot Corner.

#### VAUDEVILLE

Radio City Music Hall's 23rd annual production of "The Nativity" featured in Christmas program,... Palace bill includes Johnny Morgan, Pitchman, Three Lesters, Joe Morris & Barbara Barry, and Paula Dolan... Roxy may resume stagemshows.

#### OTHER BROADWAYS

Tallulah Bankhead will star in Streetcar Named Desire at Coconut Grove, Fla. Jan 16... Bobby Clark will tour in Damn Yankee... Huntington Hartford plans to combine elements of Shoestring Revue and Catch a Star for west coast revue in spring... Donald Cook and June Havoc star in La Ronde presented at Studio Theatre, Washington, D. C.

#### SUMMER PLAYHOUSES

Milton Stiefel plans to set up a tent theatre at Clinton, Conn to present musicals... Phillip Moloney plans a music tent theatre for Westchester at Saxon Woods Park... Anthony Farrell will rebuild and run Sacandaga Park, NY, Summer Theatre ... Equity planning to divide summer stock operations into 3 classes.

#### THEATRE BURLESQUE

T. J. Phillips won approval for license to operate Orpheum Theatre, Brooklyn, by NY State Supreme Court Appellate Division.

#### THEATRE TV & RADIO NOTES

Babes in Toyland to be repeated Dec 24 on NBC TV Max Leibman show... Lauren Bacall, Claudette Colbert and Mildred Natwick star in Noel Coward's Blithe Spirit Jan 14 on CBS TV Ford show... Eartha Kitt stars in Wilde's Salome Dec 18 on CBS TV Omnibus... Hal March, Vivian Blaine star in Dream Girl-Dec 11 on NBC TV Evans show.





GREEN  
ROOM  
DEPARTMENT

HELEN HAYES THEATRE... Herald Tribune editorial found it only fitting that star's name should shine every night in the lights of a NY Theatre (the Fulton renamed in her honor.) Love for the theatre and respect for its audience; pride in her profession; warmth, helpfulness and understanding--these have long been the characteristics of Helen Hayes, paper summed up... Star deserves better than trite remarks by 3 men, complained Lyons, Post, who thought a special 5 PM ceremony was better idea than the 8 30 PM renaming ritual.

COLUMN TIPS... Uta Hagen said to be coaching Jennifer Jones at \$1000 a day rate, hears Kilgallen... Carol Channing and husband said to have invested all their savings in The Vamp, reports Winchell... Gretchen Wyler can have lead in road company of Damn Yankee at 4 times her Silk Stockings salary, notes Wilson... Museum of Modern Art to ease out Theatre Guild to enlarge galleries, repeats Walker.

SHERWOOD OBIT... Watts, Post, rates Abe Lincoln in Illinois as the late Robert E. Sherwood's greatest play. In a day when the theatre was in danger of ceasing to be a vital part of our culture, he gave it dignity... He still managed to achieve more than all but few men in his time, summed up McClain, Journal American. Sherwood has left an enormous mark in the contemporary theatre... At funeral service at St. George's Episcopal Church, NYC, Alfred Lunt read eulogy written by Maxwell Anderson, which compared the death of the playwright to the removal of a major planet from a solar system.

DRAMA MAIL BOX---A special building for the NY Public Library Theatre Collection, plus the library's music and dance department suggested by Times reader... What do the rude playgoer's who fly up the aisle at the first drop of the final curtain do with the saved 3 minutes, asks a C. D. subscriber.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS... Why can't box office man tell customer who bought out a given night's tickets for a benefit, asks McClain, Journal American... Why not let the City Center have the Metropolitn Opera building when latter moves uptown, suggests Chapman, News.



PROS & CONS BY T. M. K.

The Cradle Song receives a handsome, well cast and directed production at Circle in Square. Large cast works together very well in production well designed for arena playing.

A Roomful of Roses provides worthwhile, satisfying evening of intelligent theatre. Nothing earth-shaking, but everything is done expertly and interestingly. A much better evening's entertainment than a frankly second rate sex-comedy.



OFF  
BROADWAY

Bil and Cora Baird's Marionette Theatre will be presented for 10 matinee holiday performances starting Dec 26. Bill was originally scheduled as Phoenix Theatre Side-Show, but Phoenix received such a demand for tickets that matinee schedule was set instead.

Venus Preserv'd will be second Phoenix Side-Show on Dec 12. Production of Thomas Otway's Restoration tragedy was presented last in NYC in 1838.

Annual Equity Library "Cocktail Revue" will be held Dec 11 at Belmont Plaza 4 to 9 PM, Admission \$1.50... Shakespearean Theatre Workshop opens Romeo and Juliet Dec 15... Next production at Rooftop Theatre will be Aristophanes' The Thesmophoriazusae due Dec 13... Hello Out There will be presented as part of a 3 act bill at Amato Theatre Dec 21... One act plays by Chekhov, Synge and O'Casey are being presented week-ends at Studio 6, 1129 6th Ave... Poet's Theatre production of Finnegans Wake will be presented at YMHA Poetry Center Dec 10 & 11.

Out of This World at Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave South, drew 3 pro notices. Gelb, Times, rated attractive cast better than the book. Herridge, Post, found it sparkling entertainment at which packed house enjoyed every bit. Kerner, Women's Wear, thought some cast members amateur, billed Jane Roman as 'Juno' as a musical comedy find.



THEATRE  
BOOK  
COMMENTS

"Critics' Choice" anthology edited by UP drama critic Jack Gaver, published by Hawthorn was okayed as a good job by Abel, Variety, included in approval are title, contents, and editing.

THEATRE  
RECORD  
COMMENTS

"Highlights of Broadway" album with John Raitt (Capitol) approved by Variety mugg... "Berlin Theatre Songs by Kurt Weill" sung by widow Lotte Lenya was recommended by trade-paper critic who suggested wider audience possible for Columbia album if lyrics were in English.

THEATRE  
TV  
COMMENTS

Dearest Enemy-Rodgers & Hart 1925 musical revived by NBC-TV Leibman was listed as pleasant, if somewhat dated musical comedy by TV critics. Van Horne, WT&S, thought it better than original. Gould, Times, found all except last act amusing.

CRITICAL DIGEST covers NYC legit theatre-News, Reviews, Comments from 50 publications. Shows, theatre records, theatre books and TV programs of interest to theatre fans are covered. Plus Playgoers Chart of concise data on tickets. Published weekly. \$25 year.

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